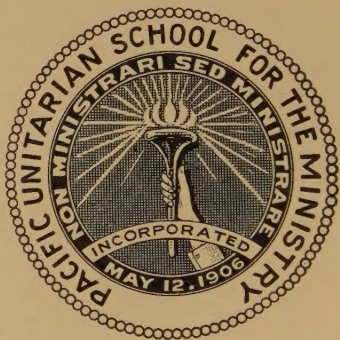




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THE GIFT OF

REVEREND

WILLIAM CHANNING GANNETT

OF ROCHESTER, N. Y.



ONE WITH THE ETERNAL

BY
EDGAR DAPLYN

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*To my dear Wife,
I dedicate
Whatever in these pages
was not first her own.*

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Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge : and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind ; love envieth not ; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness but rejoiceth in the truth : beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth : but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly : but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is love.

I.

Love's Rivals

[1 *Co.* 13, 1—3].

A MAN sat down before a certain little picture to discover how it was made. It was worked in one colour throughout. But they showed him a copy in another colour. And yet another. No microscope could show the mark of a brush. No pencil could have drawn the lines. He could recall no tool of the engraver that could work at the same time such sharpness and such softness. And at length they had to tell him that Light had worked the mystery. Light had printed all the varied copies. Light had made an original, from which they were taken. Light, in infinity of depths and tones, had changed the waiting silver, drawn it by unknown ways into shape and being. From loose and fluid aimlessness it emerged, through Light, a form of lasting beauty.

This action of Light is the action of Love also. For Love plays upon the disordered elements and seems to change their very nature. The imaginings that were all so vague, the deeds so accidental and pur-

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poseless, floating idly in the life were touched by Love, and changed to rhythmic form, and power, and aim. Love is the mystic art of the soul.

Almost every poet has sung of love. Not perhaps the highest love: for there is an alphabet to learn before the perfect tongue is ours. We learn to speak in terms of the earth and the body before we can be eloquent in the things of the spirit. The poet's lover is the dreamer of some woman's charm; he is the willing slave of a vision that is his alone: he kisses the silken ties that hold him in the heaven of a dream. The word he uses, the "love" that trembles on his lips into such bewildering and joyous music, might almost always be changed into the maiden's name. Beauty of face, or way, has spoken to him in one fair form: he calls her "Love," as though the height and depth of love were reached. How should he sing of any greater love, this poet of the passion of the earth?

It is strange that when we would quote some chant of the praise of love—of Love the Eternal, that knows not the changes and chances of human emotions and passions—we turn not to Dante and Beatrice (unless in her we see the symbol of Eternal Love); not to Shakespeare; nor to the singers of sacred Love and Faith in English poesy: we turn to the strenuous theologian of the First Days of Christianity. In the

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difficult pages of that Christian Rabbi, teeming with problems of morals and faith, and doubtful scriptural authorities—out of those mines which often depress the worker, is brought a gem which all the world can prize. A phrase from it will be held conclusive in any argument or feud. Whatever else the children may be taught in schools this chapter holds its own. Throughout his active life every preacher finds here the bed-rock of his faith. All else may tremble ; this stands firm. Doctrines may die away ; rites become but the dead drama of religion ; sects appear as the denial of the Christian spirit ; and still he does not lose heart. On this chapter he can build : on this assertion of the divinity of love, its beauty, its supremacy, he finds the foundation for all the best work that he has in him. Beliefs may question it, but Love affirms it. Love is his assurance.

With what confidence St. Paul brings his treasure to the light. It is as though he brought us something new—to be unveiled with solemn dignity. Just before he has been telling of the distinct part which we are called upon in life, and in the Christian life, to play : how each is but one facet of the jewel, and his duty is to be complete in that. Thus only shall we be prepared if higher service awaits us. To be perfection in our own part, and still to seek and desire the gifts that shall enlarge us—the greater gifts.

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Then, with the pomp of a herald he cries—
“And a still more excellent way show I unto
you.” You may fulfil your part with
faithfulness, whether as messenger of light,
teacher, wonder-worker, healer, or helper ;
but if one thing is wanting, all your devo-
tion is of no true value. Obedience because
you are commanded to these things is good ;
but there is a more excellent way than calcu-
lated obedience.

It is because I believe it still to be one of
the greatest needs of our life and time that
we should apprehend this “more excellent
way,” that I am asking you patiently to
study it with me. We have not mastered
it yet, or the religious spirit of the age would
not be as it is. Love still remains a mystery,
and one infinitely more precious than any
mystery of dogma, even the mystery of the
Divine Being. For if I know Love, I shall
know God : and I am not wandering from
Him when I am following after Love,
though professional theologians may not
approve. We seek, in Love, the most hidden
mystery of life. We see it dimly in the vale of
tears and play, as the sun which glorifies the
wood through which we walk, but which is
only seen in the golden green of the leaves
around and above. Analysis fails to lay
it bare before us—whether the analyst be
poet or psychologist or physiologist. No
visible sign nor image can be made of it ;

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words cannot describe it, much less shall paint or marble come near it. The Greeks tried, and their Aphrodite is but a lovely embodiment of that "lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes, and pride of life, which is not of the Father, but of the world."

Paul proclaims this living mystery—this power, this spirit, this essential of the perfect life. But when we look for definition, and ask "What is this grace that so exceeds our poets' speech and thought?" he shows himself the Master-Dogmatist. He declares Love's supremacy: he tells what Love will do: but of what Love is, its nature, its beginning and its end, its gifts, its rewards, he does not say. Enough for us to know our need of Love, as the supreme necessity and blessing. St. John will give the key to the Pauline assertion—"GOD IS LOVE."

St. Paul declares that Love is the highest gift a man can pursue and possess; and he assumes that his readers seek the Highest. Not for them is there to be the tragic remorse of having seen the highest and not having followed it. The wisdom of Guinevere comes too late when Arthur, the spotless king, has gone, and she can but confess.

"It was my duty to have loved the highest:
It surely was my profit had I known:
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the Highest when we see it."

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So, to St. Paul, a man has but to see the heavenly glory of Love to find no other ideal worthy of comparison with it. Love stands alone, the crown of life ; and life that misses it, though robed in the greatest of human powers, though seated on a throne of vastest knowledge, goes yet the shadow of life, a thing of Time, and not the Eternal Reality.

To emphasise this Paul compels us to look upon some of the other ideals of life. He does not say they are all a man can choose instead of love : for there is no word of Solitude, of Fame, of Public Duties, of Literature, of the Arts, of a hundred aims in life, each one of which was as vivid in his day as in ours. But he singles out certain great spiritual ideals—since he is speaking to spiritual idealists (or religious people, as we say). He calls out Speech, Prophecy, Knowledge, Faith, Charity and Self-Sacrifice. These are the Rivals of Love. Each of them alone might seem the laurel wreath which, wearing, mingles one with victors. Yet the singer of this Psalm of Love takes up each thought, peers at it, weighs it, and then lays it down as “nothing !” Not as the Preacher in Ecclesiastes lays it down—with almost a pleasure in his weary pessimism ; but as one who knows the worth and joy of that he speaks of,—who has felt the mighty flood of speech well through him in a maddening joy of utterance—who

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has been a prophet in the new Way—who has not ceased to be a lover of knowledge since he sat at the feet of Gamaliel—who has himself known the blinding light of Faith, the grateful joy of Charity, the power to endure which only Self-sacrifice can give. St. Paul had drunk deeply of these streams, and known their healing in himself. He would not lightly put them by. Neither can we. Faith, Insight, Learning, Charity, Self-Sacrifice, and Utterance are still stars that shine in the heaven of human life, guiding through troublous seas and valleys of despair. But let them be emptied of the spirit of love, they are but the gray ashes of ancient fires : no charm, no warmth, no light is left in them.

Mark that power of the Voice ("though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels"). How the voice can lead us with the magic of the word, None of us has lost that instinct of the villager which feels some secret power in words. Utter it from pulpit or platform, write it in a book, or sing it in a song or hymn, and the mind of the listener bows. He may rise to question after, but at first he bends to hear. Was it not this primal force in speech which made them of old associate "God" and "Word." "In the Beginning was the Word," the utterance, the veil that clothed the invisible thought. He who truly speaks opens new worlds to us ; fills our minds with heroes,

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dreams, that are born in us, and are not of his giving, though fused into being by his words. Working in the medium of our poor experiences he re-creates the kingdom of heaven for us. He gives us joys, hopes, comfort, strength—if he be a true artist of the soul, aiming to shape it into the Divine.

But how many times the word is void of depth and power. The painter (if that is his form of speech) dwells with infinite care upon the line and colours of a face; eyes and lips speak to us of the artist's conscious power: we are struck with the flashing colours that seem to vibrate into the mind, but something, a wordless wonderful something, is wanting. It was present in his earlier work. We *found* and *felt* it there. We knew instinctively that every movement of the brush was the fruit of a virgin timidity of love, a sense of the sacredness of all creative art. As with Rossetti, we bowed before his "Ancilla Domini," for she was indeed the "Handmaid of the Lord": we criticise his "Astarte," for she is simply a painter's model. Let a man be merged and lost in the love of his work, forgetting *whose* it is, and only intent on *what* it is, and his speech rings true and deep, with everlasting sincerity, for selfless Love has mastered him. We read an essayist and speak of his style, his brilliant phrases, his crushing satire, his sane judgments. But if there glows no human warmth and purpose in his words: if

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they are but the cold steel of intellect, it matters not what glamour of mental pride they roused in us, we soon put them aside: they stand upon the shelf, part of the chill array of those who have failed to touch our hearts, while they fascinated our minds. There is in every age abundance of the voices that attract, that speak or write "with the tongues of men and of angels," but if they have not love, and do not move us in the way of heavenly love, we tire of their words, are soon satiated with their "purple passages," or leave their physical emotions and mistaken passions. There is no rival here to Love.

Or can we imagine the Prophet without Love? What is his work but to interpret—to stand between the revelation of high truth and the unlearned listener, to divine the meaning and the way of life. The prophet it is, in every generation, whether we call him philosopher, seer, poet, preacher, enthusiast or dreamer—the prophet it is who reads the Roll that is put into every man's hand—all Vedas of the East and Scriptures of the West, all mystic impulses, all strange events. Man, walking in the shadows of mysteries, fearful at every step if he thinks at all, turns to the men of insight. They will sympathise with him. They are the meditators, whose ears are ever open to the heavenly whisperings. They cannot surely live without love? . . . But

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experience shows that the very prophets, for all their power to read all "mysteries," have fallen away. Seers have been proud and tyrannous; the heavenly interpreters have often proved but dominant priests disguised: vision without love is the vainest possession of man, it brings the very insight he possesses into neglect, and even contempt. How often has the prophet of a sect, fiery, denunciatory, or aflame with enthusiasm for his faith, seen the world "pass by on the other side"—unheeding, uninterested. Love is essential to the Interpreter.

But will not knowledge save the world? What brings such light and healing? How else shall we build up a race of large-minded men and women? What other power can cope with disease, darkness, the ocean, distance, poverty, hunger, and all the natural enemies of man? Have not the servants of knowledge in every century been the renowned benefactors? Yes, we must reverence the gift of knowledge—long for it to grow "from more to more": for in its spirit and in its keeping lies so much of the happiness of men. But there *is* a knowledge that is repellant from its want of love. The scientist may show the patience of an automaton in his study and research, but if he is self-centred and conceited, if he pours a flood of bitterness upon his critic or his opponent, his learning counts for nothing.

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We think we should be little the losers if we had it not. Religion would have gained if theologians, however proud of their "knowledge," their scholarship, their systematised doctrines, had yet placed Love first and served Love throughout.

So we may dismiss the loveless Voice, and loveless Insight, and loveless Learning, but shall Faith not stand alone? Faith was the word of the Reformers. Faith is still (in a false sense of it) the common hall-mark of a Christian. It matters less whether he have Love, if only he have Faith, which, for so many, means the power to believe certain things. But what is Faith in its actual nature? Seeley, in "Ecce Homo," has defined it. "He who, when goodness is impressively put before him, exhibits an instinctive loyalty to it, starts forward to take its side, trusts himself to it, such a man has faith, and the root of the matter is in him." Yes, faith is the instinctive answering of the soul—whether towards friend, or wife, or country, or goodness, or God. It is the very *power* of obedience, not its passivity; and once aroused it is invincible. The weakest man or nation charged with it, struggles towards the sure light of liberty and life. But great though its power, "even so as to remove mountains," yet faith that was without love, faith that was only zeal, faith that had but the high dry light of a loveless ideal, would

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be as nothing. The few would greet it, but the great mixed company of the world—the sad, the forsaken, the down-trodden, the sinners—would hardly lift their eyes to it. It was Love dwelling in Faith Incarnate who could say “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.”

One by one St. Paul has singled out these rivals of love, and with them Philanthropy (our common “charity”) and Self-sacrifice. And one by one he passes them by. Alone they are powerless to save man from himself. By one way only can they gain that power—when Love shines through them. Then they wing their way into the hearts and lives of men. Speech, Prophecy, Science, Faith—aglow with Love, are lamps that cheer our eyes and guide us through the darkness of the world.

II.

Love's Humility

[1 Co. 13, 3—5.]

IF we could read this chapter with new eyes—come to it as fresh as the morning, with no old fancies and traditions clinging to us : read, as we ought to read every living utterance, with unfettered imagination ; we might think, perhaps, that St. Paul's Love was a personal being. She comes with gentle movements, clad in quiet garb, speaking heavenly things that seem too high for common earth. Her beauty draws our eyes to her, away from every rival thought. She is the consecrating spirit whose presence vivifies and sanctifies all human aspirations. Without her they may interest but they cannot command. She must be in them, the queenly fountain-light of all their glory : then through her gracious presence will they glow—a pillar of fire to men in the dark nights of the wilderness. Faith, Prophecy, Utterance, Knowledge, mighty as these are in themselves, need love to give them abiding and effective worth. They will not lift one single soul from the Slough of Despond without her. You may convince me, by

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each of these ways, that GOD IS : but until Love dwells in you, and beams through your faith and knowledge, you will never add that word which gives me heaven, the word that rounds the universe, "GOD IS—LOVE."

One quality there is that is inherent in love, and St. Paul leads straightway to it. He touches Almsgiving and Self-sacrifice as the climax of the higher qualities. These, at least, might seem sufficient in themselves. Is there any nobler use to which possessions can be turned than in the act of giving them away to the poorer brethren? If I share all I have, is not that the fulfilment of duty and brotherhood? Especially if I give myself—"my body to be burned"—if I become the living sacrifice for my ideal, whether fatherland, religion, or home, surely such sacrifice will stand at my side in the judgment hour. Yes, if the one gift be in it—if in the almsdeed or the self-immolation there shone the still calm light of Love's Humility. This is the meaning of these three verses. Love finds her dearest joy in self-abasement. We look upon the charitable gifts of men and see but the giving. Most of us are satisfied with that. Our wants are so many, and cry with so insistent a voice that they force us to hold out the hand. And custom begets callousness. But there are always those whose faces are tinged with shame in the presence of such doings,

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whose sense of the great brotherhood is deeply pained. They see a donor apart from his gift : they read the pride of a conscious almsdeed, the condescension that stamps the absence of brotherly love. The giver is but a haughty agent bending towards poverty with uncomprehending smile. Is it any wonder that the self-respecting stand aloof from such gifts, that their leaders are stung into rebellion, and that few words have a deeper bitterness for honest and honourable poverty than that word "charity." Can they care for it when it represents but a fraction of that which is man's due? Can they value the endowment of a college, or a university, or a church, which is but a calculated set-off to a ruinous Trust in steel or oil? Shall they feel real gratitude when the savings of a gambler, whether on turf or on 'change, are given to hospitals? What shall the poor man think when meat is given him from the rich man's table, if all the while he knows that the rich man would not touch him with the tip of his fingers. Ah, charity is not so cheap and simple as it looks. It is the costliest luxury in life. It demands so much more than the gift. A patient understanding of another's life, an entry by the door of sympathy, a burning of the walls that sunder, a brother's thoughtfulness and outlook. We cannot stand upon a height for this. We must come down into the common plain, be one

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with those we help, find our hearts beat with theirs, share all their fears and hopes, and help them in the bearing of their cross. Will anything but love's humility teach us this?

And "if I give my body to be burned" (the marginal reading is "that I may glory"),—if, in the fierce pride of race or egoism, I rush on death itself, is it gain to me? Have I added to my eternal treasure? Not if love was wanting. The one test my soul will recognise in the moment after death will be that of love. Was I carried by the floods of love: did death find me forgetful of myself and my glory on the lips of men: was my sole longing that they might find the light, that the freedom I had not known might be theirs; that joy, peace, heaven might be opened to them? If in these things it was love's voice that led me (whether the death was swift martyrdom or a life-long chosen servitude) then and then only was the oblation complete. "He humbled himself, even to the death of the cross," is not a doctrine of theology, but the reality of love made divine. For there is a strange and beautiful abjectness in all true love. The lover (whether of man or woman, or child, or God) is conscious of a deep unworthiness of the treasure love gives. There is so much of wonder and surprise in it, such endless vistas of secret joy, that he is amazed that it should have fallen to

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him. He has done nothing to deserve it. In himself he is not pure enough to house it. And since love comes to him, no toil, no strain, no suffering can be too great for him to dare in love's high service.

It is this inwoven humility that gives love its power and charm in St. Paul's eyes. This makes it ride upon the dreams and forces of the world. They are helpless before it. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." What can outward might and tyranny do to a love that humbly prays for its persecutor and kisses the sword that slays it. The world stood in puzzled and irritated silence before the First Christians who could say (as Tatian tells us)—"I will not rule: I do not wish to get rich; I disdain to be an official functionary; I am no robber; I take no trouble in striving for a crown, I have put away the thirst for glory: death I despise." Let love speak with that same selflessness, and you cannot injure it. The fury of faith you can oppose: the assertions of knowledge you can question: the assumptions of prophetic interpretation you can dispute; but the lowly voice of love is the winning note of the profoundest victories. Her triumphs are inevitable and immeasurable, for she is one with all divine subtleties—with wisdom, with light, with colour, and with all sweet odorous thoughts and things.

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Note love's humility in suffering. "Love suffereth long and is kind : is not provoked : taketh no account of evil." Is any other power in us so patient ? A man may exercise the control of self which will-power gives ; he may have watched his habits as a naturalist watches some strange animal, tracks it to his hidden lair, notes what food it eats, what times it keeps, and what progeny it brings forth. So a man may study his character, and resolve to shape it into patience, self-control, and tolerance towards others. But there is a stage beyond which he will not go. That which touches himself, his own likings or belongings, immediately and unconsciously arouses a spirit of resistance, and his self-control is in danger of being flung to the winds. But when this control is not of our deliberate making, when it comes because we love, it is an immovable rock. Unsustained by love few of us are equal to the burden of this willed power : few can bear patiently the burning words of anger or of scorn : few can listen without reply to untrue charges, unjust accusations. It seems almost unhuman to suffer such things and not repel them fiercely. It is not easy to endure the misunderstandings that deem our silence the proof of cowardice, or the sign of a dull unsympathetic heart.

Many are the occasions in life when love compels us to suffer and not complain, to

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bury the injuries, the wrongful words, the unjust suspicions. To defend ourselves would be, perhaps, but to unloose more passionate utterances. So we remain passive ("suffering" as the word implies), waiting for the time when our love shall have proved itself without the laboured defence. But in the quiet patience, when love "suffereth long," she "is kind;" it is impossible to her to cherish bitterness, to keep in her remembrance things that were born in anger. Earnestly she turns away her eyes, to forget what she has seen, to hide the things that were done to her. She will not store up a hideous treasury of wrongs. Patiently will she go on her way openly heedless and forgetful of injustice, trusting that, in the end, her simple gift may find an answering love. In such a spirit, I think, did Darwin spend his days in the quiet Kentish village. Priests, theologians, called the gentle scientist an enemy of God, a hater of religion. But Darwin loved the truth of things, and with the instinctive humility of a lover turned, without anger, from the fierce outbursts of his unenlightened foes, to study lovingly the habits of a worm. He "suffered long," and "was not provoked," for he kept no account of evils done to him: and in the end the precious earth of England's noblest burial-place was opened to receive him, and this so-called "destroyer of the

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faith," reposed in a Christian Abbey. This is one victory of love—that it masters humanity's natural ways, stills the tiger in us, teaches us to suffer long, be unprovoked, and keep no grudge against any. Have we not all some steps to take along the painful way of self-surrender ere we reach the height of this sublime humility?

And love's humility "envieth not." What! Is Love without the craving to possess? Can love exist and not be all one eager long desire? "Love is the most intense desire of the soul to enjoy beauty," said Algernon Sidney, that martyr for the true republic, the brotherhood of man which England's Commonwealth had foreshadowed. The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Divines had meant the same thing when it said in the clumsy language of theology,—“Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.” Such divine communion is the essential of the soul's longing: she is most alive when the flaming desire for the “beauty of the Lord” consumes her. Can we then imagine love without an ambition—love that is satisfied? Ah, that love would be already of the past—it would be dead. Love can never be satisfied. Love is ever looking far ahead, her gaze is fixed on heights beyond; she is of the immortal mountains of the soul's sphere. No time

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will realise her dream. Eternity itself is but the realm in which she finds her infinite renewal. How can she help envying the purer love when she sees it! Yes, but that cannot be St. Paul's thought. "Love envieth not," he says. True, Love is "the hound of heaven," as Francis Thompson's poem called it. Love seeks and tracks the soul till it is gained: love is a madness to possess, the very envy of the master-spirit. But into that spirit enters none of earth's common envy. Love watches others gain and only joins in their song of joy. Love, in a religious soul, sees another find peace in a different faith; she may envy the other's peace and faith; but that is an envy that is high and pure and holy, having none of the poisoned desire, the embittered selfishness.

Nor does love "vaunt itself," boastful, "puffed-up," "behaving unseemly." Love is too sacred for the boasting tongue. It is not even conscious of itself. It serves with lowly gladness, thankfully giving itself, finding occasions of willing obedience, receiving with one mind all that comes to it. There can be no thought of self in love. It is not conscious of itself as existing apart from the whole personality, how then should it be selfish? It "seeketh not its own;" it is merged in a wide, deep ocean—the infinite sea of love, whose waves, after all, lisp but the faintest hints to earth of vast

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tides of unknown love beyond. There is nothing of space or time or personal possession in the sound of those waves. The love they whisper can never be conscious of itself apart. It is enfolded in the being it sustains. We sometimes speak of love as a thing outside us ; as "my" love, and "your" love : but in that actual phrase we show that we but survey, look out upon, and are not enthralled by love—caught up into the heaven in which we hear "words which it is not lawful for man to utter." The child's love for mother or father never can boast of itself while it is a present living reality. There is a lowliness which keeps it silent. When it shall "vaunt itself," praise its entire obedience, chant its joys, it will be in that sad day when love is looked back upon, and its object is already "in the past."

This, then, is the second step St. Paul takes in his Progress of Love. He began by showing the rivals of love, their utter fruitlessness unless love lived through them. And having firmly set them aside he begins to show us wherein love's power lies. The primal strength of love is in humility. This sweetens charity and self-sacrifice ; this gives the grace to suffer long and bear no evil ; this saves love from the fatal pride of self-consciousness. If we would enter the garden of heavenly love, we must stoop through the gate of humility.

III.

Love's Power

[1 *Co.* 13, 6—7].

THERE is a little instrument we all know that is of the greatest service to the traveller. Whether he is crossing huge mountain ranges, or vast deserts, or unknown seas, he can keep a straight course so long as he goes by his compass. He will not waste his time discussing the trend of his journey : he knows it will be useless to hold a different opinion to that of his compass. He may argue about sun, or wind, or known points, but that magnetic needle will quietly decide as to the right way.

Now St. Paul would place in our hands just such a simple guide. Love is the only compass of life. We may pay little heed to it ; we may think our own plans better ; we may think of it as intruding on the independence of the individual ; or we may count it a weakness, a sentimentality, and say—"I know my way quite well ; I shall do as I like, and do not need the platitudes of a theologian to help me." But in the end, either early or late in life, we find that love was primary—that there is one thing

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without which we cannot find our way out of life's tangles. With love holding the seat of power in the soul, difficulties and dangers are faced and overcome, and a right attitude is instinctively assumed in all circumstances. Weinel, in his "Study of St. Paul," has said—"It was of the utmost importance for the Christianity of all ages that Paul was enabled to state this thought, and to drive it home so impressively. Religious self-consciousness can find no foothold in him. . . . The 13th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is of the highest importance in the history of the Christian Church ; it is the Magna Charta of a true Christian Church which shall possess no other creed but active well-doing, and shall know no greater religious power than that of love to God and man."

Look into the two verses beginning "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness." They go more to the heart of things than any other word of St. Paul's. We have the announcement of love's power, its fervent energy, its right choice, its persistency. Take this quality with you into any of the circumstances of life, trust it fully, follow the leading of its burning and shining light, and you will pass through into peace and joy. The writer makes an assertion as to the relations of love and righteousness. There are critical moments in every life when we attempt to blend love with unrighteousness.

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Our conscience has clearly defined our desire as wrong, and yet we try to persuade ourselves to justify the wrong for love's sake. The man of business by some sharp practice succeeds : he is able to start his children well in the world : he gives his wife all she can wish for : he gains nothing for himself but a harder life, a need to keep closer to work. But in the silent moments of self-study he cannot be satisfied. He has answered the impulses that seemed to be *love's* command : he has helped those dependent on him, so that they have comforts otherwise impossible : but all the time there is a sense of falsity that will not be put aside—"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below." For in a penetrating mystic way love is bound up with the right. To do wrong is to injure love. Love cannot rejoice in unrighteousness, for love rejoices with the truth. Truth is Divine. Truth and God are at war with unrighteousness, so that the falsehood of anything is the sign of its being un-divine. If then, at the last, Truth, and Love, and God are one and the same, we can never associate either with unrighteousness. Whatever the apparent gain of unrighteousness, love can never rejoice in it, but must always feel that there is an element foreign, inimical to itself. Love that is true love cannot feel glad when a minority suffers at the hands of a majority, nor at the murder of a tyrant

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by an anarchist, nor when force achieves that which time and gentleness would have won. The love that is divine can have no pleasure in any kind of religious unfairness and persecution. The lower passions in us find delight at times in these things ; "revenge" is still a word with which to rouse the savage in a mob ; but love breathes another atmosphere, is sent from the fields of heaven, and is only saddened when passion and wrong are triumphing.

If then we could always listen to the speech of love in our hearts, we should bring conscience its greatest ally, and stream upon it the most radiant light. Often in common life we are perplexed as to conduct, we hesitate as to the form of our charities, we are tempted to harsh judgments. Well, we are only in the position of the traveller by sea or land who is troubled until he finds his compass. When we turn to love we get the guidance we were in want of. The child knows then what to do about that lost shilling or that broken glass ; the man knows what to do in the presence of that piteous poverty ; the preacher finds what to say to that questioner ; love gives the key to open the door of the right and the truth ; the Eternal Temple is in Love's keeping.

" Oh human soul ! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow . . .
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."

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Love has the power to affect "all things." Every condition and circumstance of life can be, and should be, touched and changed by it. Look at the four distinctive words—"*covereth* (marg. R.V.), *believeth*, *hopeth*, *endureth* all things"—they are an epitome of the gentle-man or -woman. They are the high-water mark of love's tide.

"Beareth (or 'covereth') all things." What a blessed world this would be if we acted upon this. In the original it suggests that which holds, a vessel that contains, and can be covered so that its contents are hidden. Has it ever struck you how large a part of the world's misery, of its evil-doing and evil-feeling, springs from the revealing of secrets? Instead of hiding one another's faults, or sealing them in the jar of oblivion, we proclaim them to one another, even if not "from the house-tops." We may do this from conceit, feeling a certain pride in being clever enough to detect the fault; or the mood of the self-righteous Pharisee may have led us to comparisons; or an earnest zeal for righteousness, or a sense of duty to society. We did not see the pain we should cause in this one's heart, or the fiery anger we should kindle in the other. Nor did we stop to imagine how shame would sear this other life as with hot irons. We shall have said, "it was for their good" that we showed that one or this their shortcomings. But may it not be that there

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would have shone a warmer light for them by Paul's lamp, If love had whispered to us to withhold that which we knew—to keep it, bear with it, cover in silence the faults—might we not have found the way to a deeper and truer healing? The boy knows when you know, and he will be bitter with you if you tell. Even to speak helpfully to him you must wait your time, keep the vase shut. But if he knows that you will not tell, he will come to love you, to love the love that is shielding him to save him. Shall we ever *all* learn this—to cover one another's sins through the greatness and thoroughness of our love? When we do, the world will indeed be a beautiful place.

“Believeth all things.” Why, this is one of the farthest-reaching truths in character and conduct. It is one of the sanest pieces of practical knowledge you could attain to. It sounds like sheer impossibility in a world so full of deceit, business frauds, high diplomacy, and every kind of untruth. And yet it is calm clear fact. It is as certain as sunshine on a summer sea. It means this—*love begins with trust*. If you look out upon the little world of your companions, your friends, the law of your comradeship is that you trust them. You rely on their word, their promises. You count on the uprightness of their behaviour not to shame you.

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What really happens is that you are instinctively reckoning on the Divine in them. Now carry that practice on to the wider field of the world. Go to all men in that spirit. "Believe all things." Look for the divine in every man—see the Good there (that is, in our Anglo-Saxon, God)—and the results will astonish you. When love leads you in this path you will perhaps best begin by looking carefully for the Good in one. Choose an unlikely person—one you think you can have little sympathy with. Study that character, watch its ways, and seek until you find. For you may be absolutely certain that in the end you will find the Good there. Then turn to another unlikely one, and the same thing will happen. So from ones you come to the many, and in the end it will be natural for you to look for the good points in others, to seek the hidden God within them. Then, "believing all things," appealing by *your* trust to *theirs*, a wondrous thing will come about—the *Good in them* will answer to *your belief in* them ; they will reach upwards towards it, trying to realise your confidence, and realising it at last. God in you—that is, Love—has called to God (Goodness) in them ; and God, in them, will answer the voice of God in you (for "Beloved, now *are* we sons of God"). Just as if you had begun by suspecting them, or hating them, suspicion or hatred would have sprung to meet you :

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Evil answers Evil, as Good answers Good. One or the other you must signify to outside lives ; the impression must either be Good or Evil, for the mind *will* have its impressions—and these cannot be neutral. Call, then, to the Good in others, for love may begin by believing all things.

“ Hopeth all things.” How many have said, “ It is hope that saves the world.” Hope saves because it loves. What hope has the loveless life? What hope is his in the dark day of failure? His dreams have vanished and he is left alone to gloomy forebodings—for having no active love he has had none of the children of love, none of the bright fairies of hope who lighten the darkest woodlands of life. Love on the earth is a synonym of hope. Love smiles even when the tears are falling like rain. Love has no room for despair. Pessimism is its very opposite. Love is all optimism—full of hope, sees “ all ” to be “ for the best.” Love of father or mother for a child “ hopeth all things : ” in spite of faults of conduct or word ; even when the nature, the character, shows dreaded blemish or weakness, still love would overcome the evil, prays for escape from the danger, and is full of hope. It is true universally. Love “ hopeth all things ” and never loses heart. Love meets the mighty evils of the world and aflame

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on her banner is the morning star. It is when your church, your society, is filled with love, when it is inspired to its gracious work for others by that spirit alone, it is then that you find the mighty power of love's hope ; and whatever your critics may say or your enemies may do, however your motives may be misinterpreted, still you toil away, upheld by a genuine love of the brotherhood, and still hoping all things.

"Endureth all things." It is a soldier's word. It implies originally the awaiting of attack, or the sustaining of a siege. It is the spirit of love's patience. All the selfishness and materialisation of the world will not easily be melted away. The Word of God is slowly, very slowly, read and understood. The forces of Evil and Darkness are ever renewing their war with Goodness and Light. But because love sees the world with love's eyes, and only longs to save the world unto itself, to make it the more realise its possible glories and joy—for love's sake the disciple of Jesus must bear up in all things, must be ever ready and on guard : he is the Christian Soldier. To him others will look and find strength (or discouragement). Filled with this high spirit of Eternal Love,—that is also Eternal Truth—covering all failures, believing all the best, hoping always and enduring unto the end, this is the type

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of that leader, crowned with the crown of life, of whom Arnold wrote :—

“ Then in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine !
Beacons of hope, ye appear !
Langour is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van ! At your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave !
Order, courage, return.
Eyes re-kindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.”

IV.

Why Love Never Fails

[1 Co. 13, 8].

IF there is one thing which we all absolutely believe it is that nothing endures. We have grown up in an atmosphere of unrest and uncertainty, and every year has taught us that "here we have no abiding city." We learn it at school when we go from form to form, and subject to subject. There are wonderful moments when history or English literature seem the most important of studies. But a sunny afternoon in the cricket field teaches us the foolishness of knowledge, and we worship the leather and the bat. And so it goes all through life. Our ideals change. The hockey-girl becomes a suffragette, and cannot understand the younger brother who is more eager for a pancake than a vote. Yet you may find her *in the end* an enthusiastic housekeeper, and quite an expert on the characteristics of servants. There is nothing of which experience would not teach us to say that it may change; no scheme of life that may not break down. The key that opens the door of vision to-

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day will not turn in the lock to-morrow. It may be rust, it may be something that has got into the key—we have a thousand reasons for a thousand changing views. When, then, an experienced man of the world like St. Paul tells us that there is one thing which never fails, we come to his words with bias in our minds, if we think seriously at all about what he says. We have seen so many “essentials.” We have so often heard “This one thing do ye.” We have met doctrine after doctrine posing as the only way of salvation ; and somehow when the crowd of busy men had swept us by with them, and we had at last forgotten each of the doctrines, there remained no sense of loss or of regret. At one time or another in life we all find ourselves joining in the search for the one necessity, whatever it is—the one quality, or the one aim, that will smooth away all the vexing confusions of life. Let us, we say, find that, and give our minds to it, forgetting everything else, and we shall be building on a rock. To one it comes as Truth. He suddenly discovers that he has come to terms with a lower world, that he is striking averages, and not making exact records ; that convention, custom, is the standard of his honesty (whether financial, intellectual, or religious); and in his astonishment he seizes the first whip, rushes through the outer courts, and clears his temple of all these unclean

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beasts, these compromises. But to-morrow they will be there just the same. Naked consistency is denied us, and some grow tired of Truth's grey service. Another comes upon the idea of Happiness. It seems a state worth sacrificing for. To measure one's duties, one's leisure, by the amount of realisable happiness ; to avoid the unpleasant, the uncouth—whatever repels ; to try to take things "as they come," and not "to be righteous overmuch ;" this may be his reading of Happiness as a life aim. But it has no stay in it. Sugar was never meant to be man's chief food. And in robuster days, with knowledge gained at the point of the sword of sorrow, it may be that such an ideal becomes as hated as it was desired. Yes, the theorists, Epicurean or Stoic, who look upon life as an opportunity to be fully used, or a business to be carefully attended to, find many aims among them, but none that last. Whether they say that the one duty is to have a living faith in the eternal life of the soul, or in sound paying investments on the earth ; whether wisdom or success be their divinity ; the aim cannot prove and assure itself. The gnostic's psychic explorations are as liable to vanish as the gold and silver of the speculator. Nothing seems lasting as a key to peace of life. What then of love? Can it be that "love never faileth?"

We have heard philanthropists speak with

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despair of love that failed. "If I hadn't given him that shilling," they say, "he would have been sober." They look upon the model dwellings for the poor and sorrowfully relate that the poor are not there, but have been driven out from their cheap insanitary slum to make way for the thrifty artisan. Love meant to help them, but a sevenfold increase of rent made outcasts of them. A man has sometimes listened to the call of "holy poverty," as good Francis called it, and sold all that he had and given to the poor. But the wise ones said, "You are pauperising instead of blessing," and his heart was heavy, though his pocket was light—for love's sake. Love has a story of pitiful failures in the face of judgment by results. Love starts a college for poor students; it looks very like failure of love's generous purpose when, in later days, only the sons of noble and wealthy families can be "in the House." "Love never faileth"? when there is hardly a charity that does not complain of fraudulent applicants, or funds misapplied, or moral weakening of the recipients. Was Paul a dreamer, and his "love" an unreality? If we think so we are in a sad way. We are missing the prize of life—that which life must confer to make it worth living. Perhaps we are not thinking of love as Paul thought of it. After all, was it not a *spirit* he spoke of? The essential quality and beauty of love

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itself may be a *hidden* vitality : something that gives life to outer things but is not to be restricted to them ; that would slip through our fingers if we try to handle too curiously. Love may be something that is not to show its real self in hospital accounts, or pension funds, or almshouses. These are things limited in time and space—love is beyond them. It is primary, essential, eternal. It was in the first breath that moved upon the waters of chaos. It has been the secret force of all evolution. It is subtly woven in with life. In spite of materialism, and gross selfishness, and whole nations caught by the passions of hate, and avarice, and bloodshed, love has still been the motive power of all the permanent elements of national life. Justice, brotherhood, education, fairness in work and wages, literature—what nation would have possessed these as the fruit of the war instinct or the fury of self. In the face of evil, and in the very medium of all that was egoistic, the divine altruism of love has asserted its power. No tyranny has slain it. After rude outbursts of the savage in us, it has gently appeared again, almost as some spiritual apparition that by imperceptible growth becomes clearer and more definite. It is this *spirit* of love that “never faileth.” The accidents, the externals, fail, and fail usually. But love keeps cheerily on its way to the hills of God, singing as it goes. The

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eyes of men follow it; its pathway is strewn with the gifts that fall from love's hand; men find an aroma of heavenly sweetness lingering on the air wherever love has passed; and, in the end, most of our race can sing with Coleridge, though they find a wider meaning in the words, perhaps, than he intended—

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame."

Yes, love never fails—never falls out of the life of men, live they ever so lovelessly.

This is because of its very nature. It is God Himself—God working in the world, penetrating it with His own desire. From the beginning He loved. He loved His work of creation. *Only a lover of it could have endured the human race.* Glimpses of that self-revealing he has perennially given. Every child of loving parents has seen the Divine love. He has manifested that love of His with unique beauty and power in his chosen sons. Jesus is the living witness to the West of the love of God. A man has but to study Jesus in the Gospels to feel that love. It glows even in those brief pages, and every truly devout reader is touched by it, so that love is a glorious and often a new reality to him. God, who is Love, reveals Himself there. It is no more difficult for Him to kindle us through the

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pages of a book than through the voice of a man. (That, by the way, is why to me the Bible is so inspired. I seem to be spelling out in it the name of the Eternal, till sometimes the very text is sacred. It is verily one of God's ways of showing Himself.) So throughout all existence, all literatures, all nations, all religions, we have the voice of Eternal Love uttering itself: *God hearing His own voice*: "the word made flesh," the divine taking form. That is why love never can fail.

Have you ever seen how love unfolds itself, or, shall I better say, *finds itself*, in English poetry? In the earlier poetry you barely recognise love as some of us see it to-day. There is hardly in this a possible comparison between Marlowe and Browning, or Shakespeare and Rossetti, or Beaumont and Fletcher and Shelley. In the Elizabethans love is earthly, sensual, a thing of decay. It is absolutely pagan. The lover delights in his mistress for her form, her beauty, her voice, her skill in dance or 'broidery. But all the time he is conscious that these things are fugitive. Death, the grave, dust, and worms gnawing at the flesh of his beloved are quite possible thoughts to him. He is a lover of the perishing elements and an arrant disbeliever in immortality. He is utterly unconscious of any higher standpoint. He does not

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love with the soul, so far as he knows : neither does he love the soul, the eternal being, the angel in his beloved. When she dies she is lost. He can hardly bear the thought of the coming of age ; he dreads Time's finger that will draw the lines upon the beauteous face. It is the desire of a strong animal for a beautiful one—hardly anything more. Romeo and Juliet, or Hamlet and Ophelia, are pre-Christian. The nervous sensitiveness of a later age is unknown ; the *soul* is still hidden in thick folds of a rough energetic life.* Some day it will float upward to the surface, permeating the folds as it passes through them. In Shelley it has done so. In Tennyson, in Browning, in Rossetti, and many others. In these Love conquers Death. In the spirit of Donne's sonnet on Death they say—

Our short sleep past we wake eternally ;
And death shall be no more ; Death, thou shalt die !

So Tennyson's love of Arthur Hallam survives the grave, and is a conscious spiritual communion through the God-hood of love.

“ Known and unknown ; human, divine ;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

* In Maeterlinck's phrase, “The soul appears to be nearer the surface of life than ever before. . . . Men understand infancy, and womanhood, and all life to-day more tenderly and more profoundly.”

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Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;
Loved deeper, darker understood ;
Behold I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

My love involves the love before ;
My love is vaster passion now ;
Tho' mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

So Browning looks to meet again soul to soul, with the soul's form, not bodiless—though with changed body—her whom he had loved.

“ The elements' rage, the fiend voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, *then thy breast*,
O thou soul of my soul ! *I shall clasp thee again*,
And with God be the rest ! ”

So Rossetti finds the divine in human love, and with a kiss glides from child to Deity.

“ What smouldering senses in death's sick delay
Can rob this body of honour, or *denude*
This soul of wedding garment worn to-day ?

I was a child beneath her touch,—a man
When breast to breast we clung, even I and she—
A spirit when her spirit looked through me,—
A god when all our life-breath met.”

In these, and others, we see the soul of Love speaking to its companion. It penetrates the veil of flesh, transmutes the body into spirit, so that, as one modern expresses

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it, "the glory of the angel within the woman was visible for a moment to the angel within himself."

Now can *such* love fail? Once truly realised it will survive all shocks of bodily ill, or even sin. It is a human vision of the divine love, and "I am persuaded," sang one of old, "that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love (that is) of God," That is why "love never faileth." It flows through the whole human race, from God, as nothing else does. It is present (not always awake) in all. Its chords can be thrilled into music by the right touch. All other visions may fail us; all other voices be stilled for ever. Our dreams and plans, our splendid purposes may fall away from us never again to rise. But love remains. No pain, no warfare, no failure, no ignominy, can bring love to nought. Silently and unsuspected love may dwell in many hearts; but when the hour arrives, and the large call rings out upon the world, she rises in response, from study and workshop, mine and kitchen, palace and hovel. For love is the one universal treasure, the one immortal spirit, the unquestioned Emmanuel—*God in us*. "Love never faileth."

V.

The True Nature of Knowledge.

[1 *Co.* 13, 8—12.]

WHEN a pianist sits down to play before an audience, his first action is to strike a few bold chords. They may or may not indicate the theme that is to follow. They are in the nature of a paradox—which is mainly intended to catch your attention. The stroke is sharp and strong, so that you instantly forget your neighbour's dress and think of music. St. Paul knew the innocent guile of this trick of the artist. He was of the race of the prophet who had smashed a vase to atoms before preaching on Israel's break-up. I think that is why he dismisses prophecy and knowledge so dramatically at the opening of his psalm of love. It is not at all that he looks down upon knowledge. Probably no people in the world has so appreciated knowledge as the Jewish nation. The Jew recognises in knowledge his capital. He is rarely the owner of large industries ; vast estates, as a rule, are not sought by him, unless as dis-

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posable speculations ; he has held his possessions by too uncertain a tenure to care about impedimenta. In the midst of peace he has suddenly had to pack and go whenever an anti-Semitic cry is raised, and his quarters are sacked and his property annexed by his persecutors. Hence his place has been more in the world's markets than in its fields or factories. He has become a mental expert. He attends a sale with no pocket-book to tell him of past prices. He knows what things are worth, and which are wanted. He is a past-master in the values of all things easily to be carried—gold, silver and jewels—so that he is the goldsmith and diamond merchant of the world. He deals in mines, but he does not work in them. His knowledge enables him to walk with safety amid the dangers of “antique” furniture and “Old Masters” of Wardour Street. He is the journalist *par excellence*, knowing exactly what men want to read, and always bringing in those personal paragraphs and touches which add a perennial youth to the Old Testament stories.

This was the race to which we ought never to forget St. Paul belonged. His capital also was largely that of knowledge. He worked at a trade which would always be good while there were sailing ships and camping armies, a trade that no exile could make useless or impossible. Wherever he

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went he could carry it on; wherever he went it was needed. And the moment he looked upon the face of religion, knowledge was of the essence of power in proclaiming what he saw. He dared not go in doubt. He might be "in fear and trembling" lest his words should only darken the divine meaning. But of what he perceived he could have no hesitation; he must declare it; it was positively "known and read of all men;" it was experience taking shape in real life. He offered no guess to men; he dealt in no "might be" and "perhaps." With him the Gospel was something definitely knowable and known, and it would be woe unto him if he preached it not. There were many who were not enlightened, who had not that knowledge: but whether they had it or not did not affect it as knowledge. A Christian knew in whom he believed; he knew that though there were many who were called Gods, to him there was but "One God, the Father;" he knew it was wrong to the weaker brethren to pretend to be a pagan, and eat meat that had been part of an idol's sacrifice, though he himself also knew that there was really nothing in either idol or sacrifice that fundamentally mattered, since they were only stone and meat after all.

Building in this way upon knowledge, Paul could not despise it, and his first use of it in this chapter must be taken partly as a play for effect. There is something

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in knowledge that can never pass quite away. The externals of knowledge, the visible things, may be forgotten or outgrown, but the inmost spirit, that impulse to attain, that desire to know what is real and true, to understand thoroughly the thing that is—that elemental force cannot pass away into nothingness. It is of the nature of the Divine and Creative Mind; it may only be the *child* of that Mind, not by long stages its fulness of perfection; but its *nature* is divine, and Shelley's name for it is essential to it, "divine philosophy." Hence Paul, by an after-thought, as it were, works out more carefully his first comparison of love with tongues, prophecy and knowledge.

Of tongues he reminds us briefly that they shall cease. The tongues of men, their varying speech, are of necessity outward. They give something (a sound) out from themselves: yet they are but the means, the organ, whether we speak of the physical tongue or a national language. Paul had a peculiar meaning for the word, peculiar to his time, yet if we use the word in our ordinary sense he speaks literal truth. It is hard to imagine, but whole languages can cease to be spoken, and even their sounds become unknown. Who can be sure of accurate original sounds for Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew? These languages have truly "ceased" as living speech: we call them

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"dead" languages. The tongue of to-day may be as verily "dead" in its time. The English of Dickens' Londoner is almost as dead to the East-ender now as Anglo-Saxon.

Paul's mystical use of "tongues" is even more thoroughly ended. We do not know for certain what he means. The mysterious "tongues" of the 14th chapter ceased with their speakers; and even the "tongues" of some mystics since have speedily gone into the Hades of thought. "The true word of the mystic," says Maeterlinck, "never grows old nor dies." But sometimes we ponder over their strange sentences, we ring the changes of meaning through their words, to find they are only sound-tous—a beautiful sound, perhaps—the music of a Ruysbroeck, or a Jacob Boehme or one of the Cambridge Platonists, fluent, learned, rippling with luminous points of refined thought here and there, but as a whole enigmatic, unintelligible. The "tongue" ceased with the master. I have sometimes thought that dogmas are the modern representatives of "tongues." They come to us, ravens in the dark plumage of the past, strutting with authority, but utterly empty of vital meaning to most of those who hear them. Yes, to be able to "speak with tongues" is not the chief end of man. It is a great gift, of mighty pregnancy, that may often bring men, and even nations, to

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life. But love is immeasurably greater, for love cannot cease, tongues must ; tongues are of the earthly plane, to meet its needs ; love is a heavenly spirit, as true for eternity as for time. The soul already has hints of an immediacy of communion with other souls (and with God) which finds speech an actual hindrance or impediment. And when the power of "tongues" has passed away, so that no utterance stirs the perfect peace of Divine communion, the love-filled soul will still, and for ever, possess that which possesses it.

"Prophecies shall be done away;" that is why prophecy cannot excel love, which "never fails." "Knowledge" too "shall be done away." This does not mean that prophecy and knowledge shall cease. It means that they are not the equals of love in present certainty of power. Love is immediately effective. It may find perfect expression in a little child. We need not wait for age to teach us the glory of love. It is outside the world of time. But prophecy and knowledge are intimately blended with human life and its experiences. They grow up in the midst of time. They are man's record of his development. No man is born endowed with prophecy or knowledge, and only patient thought can give him glimpses of either. Prophecy is the gift of reading God's book. That book has many pages. It is not only a group of

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Hebrew Scriptures; it is the infinitely varied universe, from solar systems and their laws down to the earth and man. The prophet is he who can interpret all he sees into the language of a divine life. Everything to him has a meaning towards God. All points to Him. The interpreter is the means by which many attain to a knowledge of God. The prophet sees the hand of God where other men see Chance or Fate. Of all noble service none surely can compete with that of the prophet. His is the voice that fires men to hatred of their bondage to sin; his is the trumpet-call that wakens sleeping nations: prophecy spells deliverance—it gives new meaning to each man's life, an ever-new interpretation of the worth of life, and of life's opportunities. Yet it "shall be done away." Every prophet is surpassed by the later interpreter. Prophecy endures, but under such altered forms that it hardly seems the same. The belief in God that Peter or John held was worlds apart from the thought of David or Saul. Paul had read the Scriptures. He knew that the thundering "Yahweh" of the Sinaitic range had become the quiet "still small voice" of Carmel, the waiting Anti-Baal of Elijah's altar: he knew that the "God of Hosts" of the warrior days was become "the Holy One" of contemplative Isaiah. From the "El-Shaddai" of Abraham to "Our Father" of Jesus was a

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long story of prophetic development—of the interpreting instinct. So with all those appearances of Truth amid which we walk, those parables which a lifetime only partially interprets. Prophecy tends to its own undoing. Every new reading renders the old of less value. It may begin in Eden with the divine dealings of God with a specific man and woman; it comes to read the divine in the history of a whole people in Egypt; and later the general field of history shrinks into the intensity of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah personally in spiritual communion with the Highest. So we rise continually as the prophet interprets man's relation to the Unseen, leading us at length to the heights on which the Son of Man is transfigured with the divine.

Not less wonderful is the power of Knowledge, yet, like prophecy, it "shall be done away," for it has the same limitation. Knowledge cannot break upon us with whole round light. It is "in part," "On the earth the broken arcs, in the heaven the perfect round." We are ever learning, and our past knowledge seems to become useless. Ten years, they say, is the utmost life of a scientific text-book. New facts are seen, new combinations made, new readings, and the old is quickly "done away." Knowledge is always partial. "At sixteen," said a great novelist, "I knew everything. At sixty I am learning that I know nothing."

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St. Paul was even wiser. He looked back upon his life, and saw that he had always kept true to his experience. He was satisfied with every stage, though he learned from it for the next. As a child his knowledge was proportioned to childhood, so that all he spoke, felt, or thought was exactly as it should have been ; it was the limited possibility of a child. It was only afterwards, "when I became a man, I outgrew the ways of a child." There came a new knowledge. Insight into the duty of life—the religion of the soul and that of a people—the Christian scheme of conduct,—these and many other things impossible to a child he had learnt. He could speak of them as definite knowledge. "We know that we all have knowledge," he says, and as an example, "We know that no idol is anything in the world." Yet how different it is to love. Love once king of a man's life he has not to be for ever altering his course ; no need to tack and trim with every breeze, love keeps the vessel on her way. There are no problems to love. All is "plain sailing," as the shipmen say. Whilst knowledge is looking into a rude mirror, and sees "darkly," sees perhaps "in a riddle," puzzled by that *other* knowledge that seems to be behind the mirror. There is for human knowledge none of the brightness of perfect and direct sight, "face to face." All our knowledge is but the reflec-

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tion of the surface, an appearance, and never the thing itself. "If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know." Even the scientist of to-day is conscious that he does not truly "know" the piece of chalk or coal he handles. He resolves it into elements, and re-resolves, and still there is that which first drew together, that which throbbed and lived through the now invisible forms, that infinite agency which only the theologian talks fluently and dogmatically about. The scientist is dumb. He "sees in a mirror darkly." He knows that the *Ultimate Reality* is beyond the finding of the laboratory.

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies ;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

The scientist in religion (and we should all have that spirit) has to learn this also. He has to guard against the conceit and tyranny of his so-called knowledge. "Knowledge puffeth up, love buildeth up." Gratefully he should use his knowledge of divine things, as of the Indwelling Spirit, of the Hope of Immortality, of Prayer. But not to think he has already attained to perfect knowledge. No creed can ever limit knowledge. A creed is the utterance of one time. Every age must and will have its own creed; but it must be only for its own time. Knowledge

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was meant to liberate not to imprison ; its emblem should be stars, not chains. *For, in the end, knowledge is seen to have eternal life.* On earth it is a weakling, going with feeble and uncertain steps. In the mind of God it shines with infinite power and radiance. That is why Paul, who loved knowledge, follows it to the end. He has traced its faltering steps through childhood up to man's dark visions, and in the end he leaves us seeing with the eyes of God. No longer gazing into the mirror darkly, but "face to face ;" then shall we know as we have been known : as God sees through the form of things to their reality, so shall we : our knowledge shall be perfect and divine. Thus Paul crowns knowledge with dignity and honour. Having read this we may not afterwards neglect the path of knowledge. We have learned its true and divine nature. But as we go the light of Love must shine upon the way :

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That *mind* and *heart* according well
May make one music as before.

VI.

Three Forces in Life

[1 Co. 13, 13.]

S. PAUL closes his wonderful psalm of love by naming three graces, gifts, or qualities that exist now, and may be counted upon by men. Whatever else you possess, he says, whatever knowledge you are slowly achieving towards the ultimate perfection of knowledge, these things at least you may reckon among the primary forces of life. You may do without everything else, but you must have either faith, or hope, and love.

Now let us examine his words carefully—each of them. They are applied to life. It is for the sake of making more effective workers (whether apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, helps, or others), that he has outlined love's sovereignty. Paul is a born inspirer of others, and he tells these Corinthians of his expectations of them, and how they are to realise them. They are to give themselves to the spirit of love; study with gladness all that love requires, make their knowledge, their prophecy, their tongues subserve love. These things will change or cease—love will remain. And then, as if

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he remembered the three chief forces that had moulded his own life, he opens the treasures of faith, hope and love. "Here you have things that will stay by you," he says, "things that have already shaped you, hold fast to them."

If any of us could survey life, we might not so readily find the elemental forces that make it for us. Think of it—life in its myriad-form being—an infinitely varied and ever-changing scene—the theatre of fifteen hundred million performers at one time on this earth alone ; life, with all its ambitions, achievements, failures, knowledge, industry, pleasures,—the most confusing complexity thought can approach : life, that has a different meaning and different plan for every single one of us ;—can we rightly talk of any few separate forces that are making all this life? What can there be that is common to it all? Are there certain qualities we ought to have to keep us at least in the van of life's army? Now St. Paul answers this deliberately. He asserts that there are three elemental forces that abide, powerful agents that in all conditions of men act in a common way ; three qualities that give tone and beauty to all else in life.

If we question the artist among men—the man or woman who works in human lives—whose marble or palette or canvas is the character and happiness of humanity, what shall we find ? Such an artist is work-

ing with deep intent. To him "nothing walks with aimless feet," and he tries to keep in the line of Divine will. Whether he knows it or not, he is endeavouring to carry out the unseen plans of God ; therefore he cannot work without high spiritual direction. If he is not *called* to his work, if he has only chosen it haphazard, the subtle compulsion will be missing. But if he is really a sculptor of life, a Michelangelo of the soul, eager to bring his men and women to perfect embodiment of the best and highest life, then surely there must be certain forces that control him. He is (strong as he may seem) plastic in the hands of the Divine Potter, who works by unseen spiritual ways, and leads us often when we are least conscious of being led. We act, and think we act alone, that it is our own purpose that made us act : and all the time it is often the strange working of some hidden element in us—God speaking through some affection, or longing, or willed power. We did not notice this : our obedience was so unconscious. So is it, probably, with every poet, artist, creator of life. He may be a statesman working for the better and happier life of millions of toilers : or a philosopher, bent on giving the light of his thought to a select few who will understand, and through whom the light will be radiated to many others : or he may be a priest or pastor, who would mould a group of men

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and women and little ones into a community of pure worshipping souls : or the poet may be a mother, artist of but one child's life, eager to bring that life to the perfection of human and divine beauty. These are each working in the same perplexing material. Their task is, almost, to change its very nature. What will sustain them? What will keep them true? They are forceful, as we say, brimming over with high energies ; they stimulate others, they attract, they compel. They are the " children of light " as Paul calls them—" lights in the world," set in the midst of darkness and perversity as pioneers of peace and beacons to men. Now what is their secret? What forces go to make them?

First of all stands Faith. This with many is the vital energy. To them it means that once a dream came to them. They saw with the immediate eyes of the mind " all the kingdoms of the earth." They saw the vanity of men's desires, the little span of life, the foolishness of our angers, bitterness, enmities. They saw the beauty of a human brotherhood, bound for ever together in aim and tender thought ; or they saw how Christ may live again in lives made like unto his ; or they saw the age of illumination drawing nearer, when men should live in the light of pure, true, holy thought. However the dream came, whether of a new heaven, a new earth, or a new man—it gave

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a noble glory to their day. Statesman, thinker, priest or woman, they actually *saw* a wondrous vision—and no dream, but an ideal. Somewhere in the eternal plan it verily existed. They had but seen the reflection of the mind of God in the still waters of their own soul. Their ideal was the truth itself, the actual reality that dwelt behind the scene of things we look upon. It could be realised, therefore it must be. For them, to see was to aspire. They are of those “who greet the unseen with a cheer,” who—

“Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong
 would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.”

Once convinced of the good cause, of its purity, truth, or goodness, they cannot fall away, or stand critically idle. They must be working for it; they would say they know its power, they know that the new thought must conquer in the end, and the kingship of their ideal arrive. Such men and women meet every opposing force without fear or doubt, for they have within them a mightier force—one that has been the making of life to many. Looking onward to their ideal, whatever it is, they are undaunted by evil, avarice, injustice, sin, passion, brutality, and all the beasts of the human jungle. For they are unconsciously upheld and com-

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pelled by the life-force of Faith. Faith, that hears a far call from the heights and without hesitation springs up to answer. Faith, that sees a Garden-City from the grim necessity of a slum. Faith, that founded the Christian society without a temple, a priest, or a creed—Faith is indeed one of the grandest forces in life. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The second of the forces that shape life is that of Hope. Hope is a different spirit to that of Faith : different in character, and appealing to many in whom Faith has no home. Faith looks to the end, sees the Ideal, and in the light of that vision presses eagerly on the way, having often little patience with those who cannot see. Hope is the spirit in which to-day's task is done, to-day's burden borne : hope sees no further ahead : she only smiles because she trusts : it is often the smile of a blind man, one of the most pathetic things in the world. In Watts' great poetic picture Hope's eyes are blindfolded, she crouches on the dome of the world, her harp has but one string left. Hope is the symbol of humility : Faith is the word of confident assurance. Faith is masterful, a man : Hope is the winsome pleader, the woman in us. I sometimes think Hope is far more deeply human than Faith : for to Hope defeat, death, are always possible : Hope is no flippant optimist ; her

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attitude is that of *clinging*: she clings to some Rock in the midst of Life's surging waves. Faith is a strong winged angel, the deliverer of mankind: Hope is the figure of scarred and baffled humanity. There is a mountainous isolation in the high dreams of the sons of Faith: we dare not follow their mystic flight. They tread so surely the blue air of the wide valleys, their steps aflame with beauty and mystery: we follow, and our feet fall through to the solid earth, and we can but gaze wonderingly up at them as we murmur—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." Some there are who walk by Faith alone: Hope seems too timid and dependent for them. Well for them if their faith never weakens, if its light burns on brightly. But should there come a time when "the splendid vision fades into the light of common day," the Faith that was too high for Hope's meek companionship falls miserably. They will have none of Hope's lowliness; they will not walk where they cannot see. Hence the Catholic whose Faith has broken, shattered by new thought, so often becomes an Agnostic: hence the political idealist disillusioned retires from the active field. But others walk in the strength of Hope alone. They have not Faith's large certainties: mists shroud the distant head of the pass: but with a quiet cheerfulness "they do the

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little they can do, and leave the rest to God.' Their eyes are bent on the stones of the highway : they see but a little way ahead : yet they keep happily on their path, and the peace of God is verily in their hearts. Sweetest of comrades are they. Their words, their smiles, are rays of hope to us. They have no kinship with the awful ecstasy, Faith's blinding vision on the road to Damascus. They are one with the soft beauties of the sunset, not with the lightning's flash. But both are needed. Some of us may be sons and daughters of Faith, responding intuitively to the "heavenly vision" : others are children of Hope, for whom the kingdom of God is rather a desired expectancy, and a prayer of the spirit, than the certainty of Faith.

These two are powerful forces in life : without one or other life would be unendurable. They carry us over the dark waters of sorrow and loneliness, sickness and sin.

But the greatest is yet to come. Nay, the greatest is *come*, it is here. It *is* with Faith and Hope—"now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three ; and the greatest of these is Love." Yes, greatest, as we have seen all through our study of this psalm : greatest as we knew before. For Love is God's very nature in its affection towards us, as Knowledge is His nature as Eternal Mind. Love is God's purpose with us : "that same love," as Algernon Sydney said,

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“for which God created and beautified the world, and which is the only means for us to return unto him, who is the fountain of our being.” Faith may toil alone: Hope may have no companions: but Love is over them both: for Love finds her joy in others: Love is only glad and strong in others and for others. When Love brooded over Christianity it was that the Brotherhood might be born. The keenest thinker of the first disciples became the apostle of love. He it was who enthroned Love in the being of God, “for God is Love.” John it was who felt the divine love pulsing through the world and used the words—“For God so *loved the world*”—loved His own created thought. A child may be ever so wilful and unruly, but in its secret heart it knows its mother’s love—feels it in every caress, every correction, every word and deed and gift and denial. And the world of men is no less wilful and unruly, but it also knows the loving Goodness by which alone it lives.

So when any of us would live to the uttermost—when we desire a life that is fullest, richest, best—we must get back to the main stream of life, back to the omnipotent Love of God. Let the heart and mind be filled with love; let the teachings of the teacher, the dealings of the trader, the dreams of the poet, the plans of the statesman, the obedience of the children—let us all, in all our ways, be filled with the spirit of love,

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so that by thought, being, word and actual deed we "show forth the love of God : " and we shall find that we have a power, an energy, that perpetually renews us, and is an irresistible force in our own life, and in the lives around us. Love will go with us all the way. We may outgrow many things, but the years will only make love dearer to us as it brings us nearer to the Eternal Love. Then in that day when death takes us from Life to Life, how eagerly the soul will look to know and understand that Universal Love in which it has lived, and through which it becomes one with the Eternal.

" Ah ! When the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scripted petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown—
Ah ! let none other written spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
Not less nor more, but even that Word alone."

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